

Program provides relief to Americans affected by lopsided trade agreements

□

□

WASHINGTON, DC –Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) condemned Republicans for failing to extend the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program effectively ending needed assistance to over 11,500 Oregonians who have lost jobs because of so-called free trade agreements. The TAA, which expires tomorrow, provides worker retraining scholarships for retraining at community colleges, relocation grants, and services that assist workers in finding a stable living-wage job.

“Hard working Americans who lost their jobs because of our trade policies were failed again by the Republican majority,” said DeFazio. “For the past two days, the Republican majority engaged in meaningless debate on a non-binding resolution, while they ignored hundreds of thousands of struggling families displaced by trade agreements. This is unacceptable.”

DeFazio has led the fight to stop “job-killing” trade agreements which, despite years of lofty promises from proponents, have led to a mass exodus of U.S. jobs and manufacturing as well as record trade deficits.

“On Friday we received word that our trade deficit grew by almost 33% in 2010. These trade agreements have shipped millions of jobs overseas, devastated American manufacturing, deepened the long recession and exploded our trade deficit. We need long term adjustment assistance for those who have shouldered the burden of job-killing trade agreements and we need new trade policies that will put Americans back to work.”

Background on TAA

The Trade Expansion Act of 1962 created the TAA program to help displaced workers affected by international trade agreements by giving them retraining assistance. Nearly 400,000 American workers affected by trade policies qualified for the TAA in 2010, including 11,500 in Oregon. Republicans abruptly pulled legislation extending the TAA from the schedule on Tuesday, after reportedly wanting to use the benefits as a bargaining chip to further action on the Korean, Panama and Columbian Free Trade Agreements.